

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF OHIO
WESTERN DIVISION

ODELL NORMAN, :
 :
Plaintiff, : Case No. 3:14cv456
 :
vs. : JUDGE WALTER H. RICE
 :
COMMISSIONER OF SOCIAL SECURITY, :
 :
Defendant. :

DECISION AND ENTRY ADOPTING REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE (DOC. #11) IN THEIR ENTIRETY; PLAINTIFF'S OBJECTIONS TO SAID JUDICIAL FILING (DOC. #12) OVERRULED; JUDGMENT TO BE ENTERED IN FAVOR OF DEFENDANT COMMISSIONER AND AGAINST PLAINTIFF, AFFIRMING COMMISSIONER'S DECISION THAT PLAINTIFF WAS NOT DISABLED AND, THEREFORE, NOT ENTITLED TO BENEFITS UNDER THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT FOR THE CLOSED PERIOD BETWEEN APRIL, 2007 (AN ONSET DATE AMENDED BY PLAINTIFF FROM APRIL 16, 2006) THROUGH MAY, 2009; TERMINATION ENTRY

Plaintiff has brought this action pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 405(g) to review a decision of the Defendant Commissioner denying Plaintiff's application for Social Security disability benefits. On February 9, 2016, the United States Magistrate Judge filed a Report and Recommendations (Doc. #11), recommending that the Commissioner's decision that Plaintiff was not disabled and, therefore, not entitled to benefits under the Social Security Act, for the closed 26-month period between April, 2007 (an amended onset date from April 16, 2006) through May, 2009. Based upon reasoning and citations of authority set forth in the Magistrate Judge's Report and Recommendations (Doc. #11) and in the Defendant's Memorandum in Response to Plaintiff's

Statement of Specific Errors (Doc. #9), as well as upon a thorough de novo review of this Court's file, including the Administrative Transcript (Doc. #6), and a thorough review of the applicable law, this Court adopts the aforesaid Report and Recommendations in their entirety and, in so doing, orders the entry of judgment in favor of the Defendant Commissioner and against the Plaintiff, concluding that the Commissioner's decision that Plaintiff was not disabled for the above-referenced closed period and, therefore, not entitled to benefits under the Social Security Act was supported by substantial evidence. The Plaintiff's Objections to said judicial filing (Doc. #12) are overruled. Accordingly, the decision of the Defendant Commissioner that Plaintiff was not disabled and, therefore, not entitled to benefits under the Social Security Act is affirmed.

In reviewing the Commissioner's decision, the Magistrate Judge's task is to determine if that decision is supported by "substantial evidence." 42 U.S.C. § 405(g). Under 28 U.S.C. § 636(b)(1)(C), this Court, upon objections being made to the Magistrate Judge's Report and Recommendations, is required to make a de novo review of those recommendations of the report to which objection is made. This de novo review, in turn, requires this Court to re-examine all the relevant evidence, previously reviewed by the Magistrate Judge, to determine whether the findings of the Secretary [now Commissioner] are supported by "substantial evidence." Lashley v. Secretary of Health and Human Services, 708 F.2d 1048, 1053 (6th Cir. 1983); Gibson v. Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare, 678 F.2d 653, 654 (6th Cir. 1982). This Court's sole function is to determine whether the record as a whole contains substantial evidence to support the Commissioner's decision. The Commissioner's findings must be affirmed if they are supported by "such relevant evidence as a reasonable mind might accept as adequate to support a conclusion." Richardson v. Perales, 402 U.S. 389, 401 (1971), citing Consolidated Edison Company v. NLRB,

305 U.S. 197, 229 (1938); Landsaw v. Secretary of Health and Human Services, 803 F.2d 211, 213 (6th Cir. 1986). Substantial evidence means such relevant evidence as a reasonable mind might accept as adequate to support a conclusion. Richardson, supra, at 401; Ellis v. Schweicker, 739 F.2d 245, 248 (6th Cir. 1984). Substantial evidence is more than a mere scintilla, but only so much as would be required to prevent a directed verdict (now judgment as a matter of law) against the Commissioner if this case were being tried to a jury. Foster v. Bowen, 853 F.2d 483, 486 (6th Cir. 1988); NLRB v. Columbian Enameling and Stamping Company, 306 U.S. 292, 300 (1939). To be substantial, the evidence “must do more than create a suspicion of the existence of the fact to be established... [I]t must be enough to justify, if the trial were to a jury, a refusal to direct a verdict when the conclusion sought to be drawn from it is one of fact for the jury.” LeMaster v. Secretary of Health and Human Services, 802 F.2d 839, 840 (6th Cir. 1986), quoting NLRB v. Columbian Enameling and Stamping Company, supra.

In determining whether the Commissioner’s findings are supported by substantial evidence, the Court must consider the record as a whole. Hephner v. Mathews, 574 F.2d 359 (6th Cir. 1978); Ellis, supra; Kirk v. Secretary of Health and Human Services, 667 F.2d 524, 536 (6th Cir. 1981); Houston v. Secretary of Health and Human Services, 736 F.2d 365 (6th Cir. 1984); Garner v. Heckler, 745 F.2d 383 (6th Cir. 1984). However, the Court may not try the case *de novo*, resolve conflicts in evidence or decide questions of credibility. Garner, supra. The findings of the Commissioner of Social Security and proceedings on Claimant’s application for social security disability benefits are not subject to reversal merely because there exists in the record substantial evidence to support a different conclusion. Buxton v. Halter, Commissioner of Social Security, 246 F.3d 762 (6th Cir. 2001). If the Commissioner’s decision is supported by substantial

evidence, it must be affirmed, even if the Court as a trier of fact would have arrived at a different conclusion. Elkins v. Secretary of Health and Human Services, 658 F.2d 437, 439 (6th Cir. 1981).


In addition to the foregoing, in ruling as aforesaid, this Court makes the following, non-exclusive, observations:

1. The Magistrate Judge concluded that Plaintiff had waived his argument that “the medical evidence also supports the finding that [he] could not perform work activity [prior to June 1, 2009, when the ALJ found his disability started] separate and apart from the issue of work adjustment. To the extent that Plaintiff did not waive such argument, substantial evidence more than adequately supports the Administrative Law Judge’s conclusion that Plaintiff was not disabled during the closed period referenced above.

WHEREFORE, based upon the aforesaid, this Court adopts the Report and Recommendations of the United States Magistrate Judge (Doc. #11) in their entirety, having concluded that the Commissioner’s decision that Plaintiff was not disabled for the 26-month closed period from April, 2007 (an amended onset date from April 16, 2006) through May, 2009 and, therefore, not entitled to benefits under the Social Security Act for said closed period was supported by substantial evidence. Plaintiff’s Objections to said judicial filing (Doc. #12) are overruled. Judgment will be ordered entered in favor of the Defendant Commissioner and against Plaintiff herein, affirming the decision of the Defendant Commissioner that Plaintiff was not disabled and, therefore, not entitled to benefits under the Social Security Act.

The captioned cause is hereby ordered terminated upon the docket records of the United States District Court for the Southern District of Ohio, Western Division, at Dayton.

March 24, 2016



WALTER H. RICE, JUDGE
UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

Copies to:

Counsel of record